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to have attended the 'Leda' of Michael Angelo. Brought to France in the sixteenth century by Antonio Mini, it was frequently engraved, was mentioned in a catalogue of the "Wonders of Fontainebleau," published in 1642, and was said to have been burned some few years later. But one authority declares that the picture was in existence at least a hundred years after the date of its supposed destruction.

Be that as it may, M. Arsène Houssaye, about eight or ten years ago, purchased at a picture-sale at the Hôtel Drouot some six or eight paintings, among which was the 'Leda' now under consideration. Certain portions of this last struck M. Houssaye as being inferior to the rest of the painting, both in colouring and design. He examined his new acquisition carefully, and perceived, beneath the last layer of paint, lines and touches which indicated the existence of another design beneath. He called to his aid a skilled restorer: the picture was cleaned, and a few scales of the paint were carefully removed. Underneath appeared traces, not of a sketch, but of a completed work. By dint of rubbing and scraping, the inferior parts of the picture, the head, the breast, and the right hand, disappeared, to give place to others, which an enthusiastic critic declares to be of ideal beauty. The question still remains to be decided as to whether this restored picture be or be not the lost work of Michael Angelo—a riddle which will probably never receive an authoritative solution.

Already there are innumerable rumours afloat respecting the artistic marvels that are now in preparation, either for the Universal Exhibition or the *Salon* of next year. Among these, the 'Diana surprised by Actæon,' of Jules Lefebvre, appears to hold a prominent place. This picture, one of the largest and most important which the gifted artist has ever undertaken, represents the goddess surrounded by her nymphs, and standing erect, her hands crossed over her bust in a graceful attitude of alarmed and indignant modesty, while her affrighted attendants cluster about her. It is

predicted that this noble picture will win for M. Lefebvre the Medal of Honour next year. It was commenced for the *Salon* of last spring, but, when nearly completed, the artist discovered that one of the secondary groups was too far off from the central one. He did not hesitate to efface all that portion of his picture and to recommence the work of months. Thus it happened that his chaste and elevated talent was only represented at the *Salon* by a single picture of small size, the 'Pandora.'

Clairin has also commenced a picture of large dimensions and elaborate composition, representing 'Moses dividing the Waters.'

Goupil has recently had on exhibition a large landscape, a mountain-view in Scotland, by Gustave Doré; a reproduction of Merle's 'La Folle;' and a very graceful figure of a young girl in white satin, seated on a bank overgrown with grass and wild-flowers, and holding a petal of a flower to her lips, while a book lies open before her. Evidently, like the Gretchen of Faust, she is trying some form of floral divination. This very pleasing and carefully-executed picture is by Perrault.

A statue of Jeanne d'Arc has just been discovered at a farm near Fécamp. It was found standing erect in a niche of an old farmhouse of the village of Toussaint. A moveable closet or side-board had concealed the existence of this niche from time immemorial. The figure is in stone, but is covered with a layer of whitewash or plaster, which conceals the details of the work and the outline of the features. Traces of an inscription were visible on the pedestal, and a vigorous course of scraping brought to light the words "Jeanne d'Arcques dite la Pucelle d'Orléans." It is impossible at present to fix the date of the execution of this statue. The farmhouse in which it was discovered is of very great antiquity. Two smaller statues were found, one placed on either side of the niche. One of these represents the Holy Virgin; the subject of the other has not yet been recognised.

LUCY H. HOOPER.

GRECIAN CLIMATE AND GREEK ART.



FOUR years ago I passed the greater part of a year almost within sight of "Sunium's marble steep," and had an opportunity of verifying the accounts I had read, and already partly experienced, of the sky and climate of Greece. I had facilities and opportunity enabling me to range over the interior of the country, to go from one island of the Greek Archipelago to another, and to see the nature of the changes that occasionally take place. From July to October, indeed, there was hardly a change. The sky was nearly always free from clouds, but it was by no means always equally clear. Strong winds coming down from the Balkan swept through and among the valleys, and through the channels between the islands, and now and then the natural result was to produce mist. But of actual rain-cloud there was none. The weather of that year was not exceptional or remarkable, and when towards the middle of November change at last took place, and torrents of rain replaced the perpetual drought of summer, I learned also what a winter in the Eastern Archipelago might mean. I had previously been familiar with winter in the Adriatic, on the Italian shores, in Spain, and on the north coast of Africa, and I was not without experience in the Black Sea and the mouths of the Danube. The difference, however, was marked. Owing to causes not difficult to trace connected with the position of the mountain-chain of the Balkan, and the peculiar form of the ragged peninsulas of Attica and the Morea and of the long islands running north and south nearly parallel to them, owing also partly to the absence of rivers and lakes, and therefore of natural and permanent receptacles and channels of water, the rain is retained for a time in shallow pools near the coast, which are only separated from the sea by low sand-banks, and continue to exist and to exhale miasma during a large part of the year. But the air remains almost always clear and dry, and the atmospheric effects vary but little. The changes of temperature and moisture of the winds that meet and dispute possession are not

very great, and the climate is thus preserved from the effects that throughout Western Europe cannot but be felt when the warm southwesterly winds, that have become charged with large quantities of vapour by blowing for thousands of miles across the Atlantic, come in contact with cold but saturated northwesterly winds, fresh from the Arctic Ocean, or with dry easterly and northeasterly winds that have traversed the vast plains of Northern Asia and Europe. The atmospheric effects do not consist much of picturesque and highly-tinted clouds, but of distinct tints of colour, passing from perfect opalescence to the richest reds and yellows, and characterising the whole of a sky whose transparency is hardly affected. Sunset is marked as usual by redness when the sun's declining rays pass through a great thickness of air. I have seen the delicate white-marble columns and pediment of the Parthenon and the other buildings of the Acropolis, whose natural colour is slightly yellow through the stains of age and weathering, reflecting the purest and most brilliant blood-red, and then, as the sun disappeared and the moon rose behind them, standing out in the most marked contrast. So also the tops of the Eubœan mountains, often covered with snow even during summer, would appear of the same exquisite blood-red tint when seen from the hills of Laurium on a clear autumnal evening.

There is little contrast, and not much variety, in Greek skies. Winter is often rainy and often cold, but seldom thick. Spring is also wet at times, and may be cloudy and even disagreeably cold, but still clear. Summer and autumn are almost without change.

It is impossible not to recognise in these climatal conditions some explanation of the peculiarities of Greek nature and of Greek Art. The buildings are felt to be adapted to the conditions of existence. The simple pure outlines of the older Greek buildings are modified from the Egyptian and perhaps Ninevitic and Assyrian types; they are less heavy, more elegant in form, decorated with sculpture of a higher order, and more effective. They

are adapted to be seen in connection with sea and land, with broad masses of rock little covered by vegetation of large growth, and through an atmosphere which permits every detail to be recognised. The sculpture with which they were ornamented could also be seen to perfection. Even the most delicate details, at the height at which they were placed on the pediment of the Parthenon, would certainly be seen to advantage, not merely from the noble entrance to the Acropolis, but even from the plains lying at the foot of the mount so named, capped by one of the noblest buildings ever constructed.

The sculpture of Greece, whether exposed in the temples or in the public cemeteries, partook of the same character. It could best be seen in the open air, where it retained its exquisite finish and the finest marks of the skilful hand of the sculptor from generation to generation without injury. The specimens laid bare during the recent excavations at the entrance of the present city of Athens show this as clearly as those found in the Sacred Way leading from Athens to Eleusis. The same simple, noble, and touching outlines characterise everywhere this class of sculpture, and derive much of their effect from the surrounding circumstances of land, sea, and air. Placed elsewhere they lose effect, and that soft melancholy and resignation so feelingly expressed become almost painful when the climate is gloomy, the air thick, and the sky grey or white. The Art of Greece has always seemed to me intensely insular, and yet belonging to islands which have permanently a dry atmosphere and a pure sky.

It is unfortunate that we know so little of pictorial Art as it was presented to the instructed and intelligent Greek in the best days of Grecian history. The art of blending and contrasting colour must have been attained, and was probably perfect. Nowhere do colours appear so bright, or mix so well, as in the kind of light and atmosphere characteristic of Greece. No doubt colour was largely employed in all decoration. With us colours do not blend well, and, owing partly to climate, partly to social conditions, partly to natural taste, we cannot endure pure colour where, beyond all doubt, the Greek delighted to see it. But the state of the atmosphere has much to do in this matter; we should like colour more if we were able to see it better, and if our eyes were educated to its use.

I wish I were better able to do justice to the subject I have undertaken, but my pen fails when I would illustrate the peculiar features of the Greek islands and of the peninsulas. There is a general idea among Greek travellers that the impression of barrenness and grey naked rock that meets one's eye everywhere on passing along the coast on the deck of a steamer or yacht belongs to the whole country, and that, whatever it may have been once, Greece is now almost without vegetation. The olive with its sombre leaves and melancholy trunk, an occasional fig-tree sprawling over the walls, and the vines, which are only in leaf for about four months of the year, seem to be the only redeeming points. But those who know the interior, and who have seen it in all seasons, are well aware of the intense and brilliant green of the more common varieties of coniferous trees that occupy square miles of country without interruption, and never lose their beauty. Like many other Eastern countries, but more than many—for the variation of the surface of the ground is greater, and the outline is more picturesque—much of the plant-life is limited to the season of spring, and that which is not so limited is to be found only in sheltered valleys, where the droughts of summer and autumn are less felt, and the shade received prevents or checks rapid evaporation. The absence of summer rain is not peculiar to any one country or district; it is universal in every part of Central and Eastern Europe and

in the Asiatic countries yet farther removed from the influence of the southwesterly gales which come from the Atlantic laden with moisture, but whose moisture is sucked out of them before they reach the eastern shores of the Adriatic. The hot winds from the desert, when the sirocco blows, also tend to increase the dryness, while there are no winds that really bring moisture at this season.

The Greeks certainly loved town-life, and lived chiefly in the large cities; but it is equally certain that they visited distant spots, and inhabited the open country to some extent. Throughout Attica remains are found of their works and habitations, and the population in ancient times was large enough to require that the whole country should be more or less sprinkled over with habitations. But the style of houses now, and probably then, renders it almost impossible that they should leave any clear indications behind them. The houses, no doubt, were constructed of stone, because there was an infinitude of stone, and little of any other building material at hand. But the stone for the poorer class of houses was and is mere rubble, consisting of weathered fragments of limestone lying on the surface; and whether these fragments of stone as they are now found have been distributed by Nature or piled by human hands there is rarely any clear indication. It was not everywhere that walls and temples and other buildings were constructed showing that marvellous capacity for construction which excites our curiosity so much in the earlier Cyclopean efforts. When large numbers of work-people, probably slaves, were employed, as in the neighbourhood of ancient mines, the remains of subterranean dwellings, constructed by excavating the solid rock, are very numerous and very curious. We see in them how the slave population was then lodged; but, in fact, wherever large numbers of human beings are brought together for manufacturing purposes even now, the same peculiarity is observed. There is a shed, twenty or thirty yards long, with a low, lean-to roof supported by a mud wall at the back, about eight or nine feet high, and a front wall less than six feet high: there are no windows thought of. In such a place a score of men are presumed to find all the accommodation necessary. A long, wide divan or seat, ranging from one end to the other, and consisting only of a bank of earth, is the couch for as many as happen to be present. There is no reason to suppose that fashions have changed. People thus lodged must evidently live in the open air, and cannot understand the nature of house accommodation as it would present itself to an English, French, Belgian, German, or American mechanic. But it suits the Spaniard, and is universal in the East. This living in the open air, regardless of home comfort, was probably at the bottom of many of the marked peculiarities of the Greek character. In this way they became familiar with Nature, and admired only such Art as lends itself to the development of external form. Architecture and sculpture are essentially the arts that belong to the life of the East, which is an out-of-door life in the strictest sense of the word.

Greek Art, then, may be imagined to have some reference to the climate of Greece, and it is reasonable to assume that some of the changes from Greek to Roman forms of Art are due to national habits derived from different climates. Greece certainly supplied South Italy with ideas and types, and these were not at once modified. The buildings of Sicily—the temple at Syracuse especially, as compared with the temple of Pæstum—show a divergence which is of interest in this respect. They are adaptations prepared by Greek artists, and are different from the aftergrowth of Rome under altered conditions of life and climate.

D. T. ANSTED, F.R.S.

NOTES.

UNGER'S ETCHINGS—A year ago we drew the attention of the reader to the beginning of the publication of the etchings of Unger, and we now have to announce the completion of the work. These etchings are seventy-two in number; they represent the great masters of the Dutch, Flemish, and Venetian schools of painting, among the painters being Rubens, Rembrandt, Paul Potter, Paul Veronese, Tintoretto,

Guido, Vandyck, Teniers, Jan Steen, Ostade, Hals, Wouwerman, and many others. We know of nothing in the whole range of engraving more thoroughly inspired with high-Art spirit than these etchings. They reproduce in black-and-white the characteristics of the works they copy with a success that is simply surprising. In our former notice of the work we quoted from Hamerton, who declares that "no engraver who ever lived